

# First Steps Travel Survey

August 2006

The intent for this instrument was to solicit responses from current First Steps providers for their comments on:

1. would an incentive of increased reimbursement for services allow them to cover a greater geographical area,
2. if so, how much further would they travel,
3. what is the preferred reimbursement (flat rate or mileage),
4. and are current incentives meeting their needs and expenses?

Also included were questions to establish current area served, mileage accumulated in providing services to families, and provider thoughts on the best incentives.

The survey was posted on the DESE First Steps web site. Invitations for responses were sent out to all First Steps providers on August 15<sup>th</sup>. A reminder for those that had not responded was sent out on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Both emails were sent via the First Steps list serve. The instrument did not ask for personally identifiable information so the assumption is made respondents could reply truthfully.

The results of this study are not statistically significant for the current provider population of 1228\* people. There were 499 responses which is 42% of the population. There is a sampling bias as respondents were not randomly selected from the total population. There is no agreed on methodology in the social sciences for separating responses when a sampling bias exists. Allowing anonymous responses participants may have submitted more than one survey. However, with such a large response the survey

can be viewed as a forum for responses by those concerned with the current travel reimbursement policy.

For validation of the preliminary results in this instrument a refinement of the questions could be accomplished. A random sample of respondents could then be selected for participation. For verification a series of focus groups could be held to represent all of Missouri's First Steps providers.

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## First Steps Travel Survey Results

### 1. What is your employment status?

Independent provider	187	37%
Employed by agency	230	47%
Independent provider and affiliated with an agency	82	16%

### 2. Enter the county you live in.

Please see Appendix A for responses to this question.

### 3. Which best describes the geographic location where you live?

Large urban area	104	21%
Suburban	181	36%
Mid-sized city or town (30,000 to 50,000 population)	50	10%
Small town	78	16%
Rural	84	17%

### 4. How many miles do you currently travel to provide First Steps services on average each month?

Less than 200 miles	129	26%
201 - 400 miles	117	23%
401 - 600 miles	64	13%
601 - 800 miles	69	14%
801 - 1000 miles	41	8%
Over 1001 miles	78	16%

### 5. Currently, what is the farthest you travel (in miles) – one way – from your home or place of business?

0 to 15	89	18%
16 to 29	139	28%
30 to 45	170	34%
46 to 60	50	10%
61 to 80	27	5%
89 to 100	13	3%
Over 100	9	2%

### 6. Would you be willing to drive beyond your current distance, if there was a travel reimbursement?

Yes	351	71%
No	146	29%

A. If you answered "Yes" above, how far (in miles) would you drive from your home or office?

0 to 15*	179	36%
16 to 29	37	7%
30 to 45	119	24%
46 to 60	113	23%
61 to 80	27	5%
89 to 100	13	3%
Over 100	9	2%

\*172 responded with 0 for "0 to 15"

7. What do you believe is fair travel reimbursement?

Mileage only	82	17%
Reimbursement for time spent in travel only	31	6%
Both mileage and time reimbursement	383	77%

8. How far do you typically travel (in miles) to provide services (one way)?

0 to 15*	197	41%
16 to 29	129	27%
30 to 45	116	24%
46 to 60	23	5%
61 to 80	9	2%
89 to 100	2	<1%
Over 100	6	1%

\*6 responded with 0 for "0 to 15"

9. How many miles do you travel in a typical week?

Less than 50 miles	63	13%
51 - 100 miles	108	23%
101 - 250 miles	164	36%
251 - 400 miles	69	15%
401 - 600 miles	44	9%
601 - 1000 miles	20	4%
Over 1000 miles	1	<1%

10. There are two different ways to reimburse for mileage. An amount can be paid per mile, or a flat rate can be reimbursed. Select the method that you would prefer to have used for reimbursement.

Per mile	453	93%
Flat rate (when exceeding a set distance)	36	7%

If you answered "Flat Rate" above please answer the next two questions (A & B).

A. How many miles should one travel (one way) before a flat rate is paid?

Please see Appendix B for responses to this question.

B. What is a reasonable rate for that distance?

Please see Appendix C for responses to this question.

11. Which do you feel would be a greater incentive for you to provide services to children living outside your typical service area?

Mileage reimbursement	249	51%
Increased provider rates	238	49%

12. Have you received the current travel reimbursement for 60 miles of travel one way?

Yes	38	8%
No	455	92%

13. Do you believe the current travel reimbursement of \$45 for 60 miles of travel one way is reasonable?

Yes	287	61%
No	188	39%

14. If you have a comment on the current travel reimbursement for 60 miles of travel one way please tell us here.

Common themes in responses to this question (comments in quotes are exactly as submitted, comments not in quotes are paraphrased from more than one comment):

Flat rate should kick in at 45 miles.

60 miles or 1 hour travel time. In rural areas 1 hour can be much less than 60 miles.

One hour travel time out, one hour therapy, one hour back, means could have seen 3 kiddos close to office in the same amount of time. Compensation needs to reflect this when traveling to see clients.

“How do you submit for it? I didn't know that it was possible. Is this only if you go 60 or more miles one way per child or is it 60 miles accumulated in one day?”

“I am not willing to travel due to the inconsistency of parents being present for their session and a large amount of time being wasted on the road.”

“I think it should be less than 60 miles--more like 35+--but you can have graduated rates. For example, 35+ can be 25.00 and 50+ could be 35.00 and anything over 60+, 45.00.”

This quote sums up many comments. “This should not be the only travel reimbursement. We should be reimbursed for our mileage regardless of how far we are driving. Other program/companies do not expect their employees to drive well over 100 miles each day with their personal vehicle without some sort of reimbursement. I have seriously considered quitting my job recently. Gas/other car repair are costing me about a large chunk of my monthly income.”

“Rather than having to travel 60 miles to receive compensation, we should be paid for all mileage or at least after 10 miles.”

15. Is the lack of mileage reimbursement a deterrent for you in expanding the area you serve for First Steps?

Yes	437	89%
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No

53 11%

16. Are there any other factors that would persuade you to increase the distance you are willing to travel?

Yes

235 50%

No

234 50%

A. If you answered "Yes" above, please share those factors that would persuade you to increase the distance you are willing to travel.

Common themes in responses to this question (comments in quotes are exactly as submitted, comments not in quotes are paraphrased from more than one comment):

“Give me one of the state cars and increase my hourly pay to help defray my travel time”

“Increased reimbursement rate and paying a flat rate”

“More than one child referral in the area at the same time.”

“Lowering the mileage limit and increasing reimbursement for situations where you are only traveling to see one child.”

“When I moved to a rural area, I committed to providing services to children who otherwise would be without. If a service coordinator calls and cannot get a provider, that is my incentive. The mileage reimbursement is nice but I do not use it if I am choosing to travel within a 60 mile radius, since that is what I have to do to sustain a caseload. I think we have to watch out that a reimbursement policy would not be abused!”

“If there is reimbursement for drive time and mileage I would consider expanding my territory.”

“Increased hourly rate for all First Steps clients. I am working in IL and MO because IL pays \$70.44 per hour minimum and IN pays \$80.00”

“When accepting clients for First Steps, it is always a chore to block out time for the paperwork at home. It would be nice to have a lower rate allowed to pay for 30 minutes of paperwork per child”

“Hourly wage while traveling”

“An hourly rate for the time spent traveling (reduced rate, say half what the provider hourly rate is for the service rate per hour) plus reimbursement for mileage”

“As an independent provider that contracts with a variety of places, I charge \$.33 per mile and hotel accommodations when site is 100 miles or more away.”

“More than one child in an area would be a good incentive. Service coordinators could compare case loads to compile all children in an area. Finding a central location to serve children in very rural areas so more children could be provided services.”

“One solution, even though it is not a natural environment, is to have a central location, possibly a school that families could come to get therapy.”

“-flexibility in scheduling, i.e. seeing a child 2x/mo for longer (could include parent consult time)”

“If I would get paid regardless of whether therapy takes place or not. The reason for this is that if the family is not home, I would have wasted 2 or more hours of work, and even if I get a cancellation notice ahead of time, I would still be losing a considerable amount of time and income.”

“Satellite centers (possibility space donated 1/week from churches, etc. I would drive much further if I knew I would be able to consistently serve several children per day in one area.”

“Mileage reimbursement, increased provider rates, and compensation for no-shows or last-minute cancellations.”

“Also, will people be reimbursed and then still claim the mileage at \$.48/mile for tax purposes?”

## Appendix A

Question 2. Enter the county you live in.

All responses are represented below. There are a number of respondents that listed St. Louis or St. Louis City or St. Louis County. The responses were counted as entered.

7	Adair
1	Adams county, Illinois
1	Atchison
1	Audrain
1	Barry
1	Barton
1	Bates
20	Boone
6	Buchanan
3	Butler
3	Callaway
2	Camden
15	Cape Girardeau
3	Carter
5	Cass
1	cedar
2	Chariton
5	Christian
1	Clark County
18	Clay
5	Cole
1	Cooper
1	Crawford
2	Creve Couer
1	Dade
1	Dallas
1	Daviess
1	Dent
1	Douglas
8	Franklin
1	Gasconade
1	Gentry
25	Greene
1	HENRY
1	Hickory
1	Howard
2	Howell
1	ILLINOIS
27	Jackson
10	Jasper



19	Jefferson
5	Johnson
11	Johnson Co KS
3	Lawrence
1	Leavenworth, Kansas
2	Lincoln
2	Madison
2	Madison County, Illinois
1	Maries
5	Marion
4	Moniteau
1	Monroe
1	Montgomery
1	New Madrid
1	Newton
1	Nodaway
1	Osage
3	Pemiscot
2	Perry
3	Pettis
2	Phelps
5	Platte
1	Pulaski
3	Randolph
1	Ripley
1	Saline
1	Scotland
5	Scott
1	St Francois
48	St. Charles
6	St. Francois
91	St. Louis
21	St. Louis City
26	St. Louis County
6	Ste. Genevieve
2	Stoddard
2	Stone
1	Taney County
2	Texas
3	USA
1	Warren
2	Washington
2	Wayne
1	Webster
1	west county St. Louis
3	Wyandotte, KS

## Appendix B

Question 10A and 10B (All respondents that answered either 10A and/or 10B are listed below. Response to question 10 given for reference to response on 10A and/or 10B.)

Respondents were instructed to answer 10A and 10B only if they had selected “Flat rate” for question 10. Many respondents selected “Per mile” and then responded to question 10 A and/or B. All the responses to question 10A and 10B are given below as well as their response to question 10. One interpretation would be that respondents were offering in 10A when a per mile reimbursement should start. In 10 B respondents may have been stating what they thought the reimbursement amount should be.

<u>Q 10</u>	<u>Q 10 A</u>	<u>Q 10 B</u>
Flat rate	1	5
Flat rate	10	\$5
Flat rate	15	10
Flat rate	15	65.00/visit
Flat rate	20	0.3
Flat rate	20	15
Flat rate	20	\$15
Flat rate	20	1 hr salary
Flat rate	20	
Flat rate	21	\$20
Flat rate	25	25
Flat rate	30	\$20
Flat rate	30	20
Flat rate	30	22
Flat rate	30	\$45.00
Flat rate	30	65
Flat rate	40	40
Flat rate	40	45
Flat rate	40	50
Flat rate	40	\$50
Flat rate	50	45
Flat rate	50	
Flat rate	1 mile	\$12.50
Flat rate	1 mile	one dollar per mile
Flat rate	10 miles	6.5
Flat rate	10 miles	\$20
Flat rate	15 miles	\$10.00
Flat rate	15 miles	11.25
Flat rate	20 miles	\$33 per hour
Flat rate	30 miles	45
Flat rate	45 miles	\$60
Flat rate	45-59, 60-74, 75+	scaled \$35, \$40, \$45

Flat rate	5miles	\$10.00 per each additional 10 mile increment
Flat rate	5miles	\$10.00 per each additional 10 mile increment
Flat rate	Anything after 20 miles one way	\$100
Flat rate	Rate paid by hour will be easy to figure and will be fair, based on federal mileage rate of 44.5 per mile rate of 50.00/ hour would reimburse slightly more than miles to account for time and be easily figured by the quarter hour	

Per mile	10	MO/Fed rate
Per mile	20	0.32
Per mile	20	whatever the feds allow for reimbursement
Per mile	25	gov't tax rate
Per mile	40	0.48
Per mile	40	75 cents/mile
Per mile	50	
Per mile	100	\$80.00
Per mile	10 miles	40.5 cents/mile same as IRS
Per mile	20 miles	\$5
Per mile	N/A	N/A
Per mile		0.35
Per mile		\$0.35
Per mile		\$0.35
Per mile		0.4
Per mile		\$0.42
Per mile		0.445
Per mile		.39/mile
Per mile		.44 per mile
Per mile		40 cents
Per mile		40 cents per mile
Per mile		50 cents
Per mile		based on price per gallon
Per mile		IRS rate
Per mile		same as that of hourly rate

## Appendix C

Question 14. If you have a comment on the current travel reimbursement for 60 miles of travel one way please tell us here.

(Responses are summarized)

- 40 Increase travel reimbursement
- 1 Increase travel reimbursement & reimburse for no show
- 1 Increase travel reimbursement & reimburse for no show travel time
- 8 Increase travel reimbursement & provide mileage
- 1 Increase travel reimbursement satellite clinics
- 5 Increase travel reimbursement & travel time & provide mileage
- 6 Increase travel reimbursement & travel time
- 4 Increase travel reimbursement & travel time & provide mileage
- 1 Reimburse for no show & increase provider rate
- 1 Reimburse for no show & increase provider rate & travel time
- 1 Reimburse for no shows
- 14 Provide mileage
- 2 Provider increase
- 22 Travel time
- 1 Travel time & increase provider rate
- 1 Travel time & reimburse for no shows
- 1 Travel time & provide mileage
- 1 Travel time & provide mileage
- 111 Responses

## Appendix D

Question 16.A. (16. Are there any other factors that would persuade you to increase the distance you are willing to travel?) 16. A. If you answered "Yes" above, please share those factors that would persuade you to increase the distance you are willing to travel. (Responses are summarized)

5	Full payment for no show
1	Full payment for no show & mileage
1	Full payment for no show & mileage & provider rate increase
2	Full payment for no show & provider rate increase
1	Full payment for no show & provider rate increase & more clients single location
1	Full payment for no show & provider rate increases & travel time
3	Full payment for no show & travel time
1	Gas card
1	Lodging & meals
11	Mileage
1	Mileage & hotel
20	Mileage & provider rate increase
28	More clients single location
2	More clients single location & mileage
1	More clients single location & provider rate increases
1	More clients single location & travel time
2	Paperwork
53	Provider rate increase
2	State car
1	State car & travel time
35	Travel time
25	Travel time & mileage
1	Travel time & mileage & paperwork
7	Travel time & mileage & provider rate increase
5	Travel time & provider rate increases
15	Travel time & mileage

226 responses

## Appendix E

Sample of the survey as posted on the web.

# First Steps Transportation Survey

The DESE, SICC and the Governor's Office are seeking information regarding the impact of current transportation policies in First Steps. We are seeking to know more specific details about transportation and how we might address this issue that has been associated with provider availability in many areas of our state.

Your responses to these questions will be very helpful as future decisions are made.

Follow-up questions for 6, 10, and 16 depend on which answer is selected. Please read the LETTERED items that follow these questions to see if you should respond.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE SURVEY:** Click your mouse on each question or use the "Tab" key to move from one question to the next. \*Do NOT use the "Enter" key until you are finished with the survey\*. When you press the "Enter" key it will submit the form.

1. What is your employment status?

- ☐ Independent provider
- ☐ Employed by agency
- ☐ Independent provider and affiliated with an agency

2. Enter the county you live in.

3. Which best describes the geographic location where you live?

- ☐ Large urban area

- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Mid-sized city or town (30,000 to 50,000 population)
- ☐ Small town
- ☐ Rural

4. How many miles do you currently travel to provide First Steps services on average each month?

- ☐ Less than 200 miles
- ☐ 201 - 400 miles
- ☐ 401 - 600 miles
- ☐ 601 - 800 miles
- ☐ 801 - 1000 miles
- ☐ over 1001 miles

5. Currently, what is the farthest you travel (in miles) – one way – from your home or place of business?

6. Would you be willing to drive beyond your current distance, if there was a travel reimbursement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

A. If you answered "Yes" above, how far (in miles) would you drive from your home or office?

7. What do you believe is fair travel reimbursement?

- ☐ Mileage only

- ☐ Reimbursement for time spent in travel only
- ☐ Both mileage and time reimbursement

8. How far do you typically travel (in miles) to provide services (one way)?

9. How many miles do you travel in a typical week?

10. There are two different ways to reimburse for mileage. An amount can be paid per mile, or a flat rate can be reimbursed. Select the method that you would prefer to have used for reimbursement.

- ☐ Per mile
- ☐ Flat rate (when exceeding a set distance)

If you answered "Flat Rate" above please answer the next two questions (A & B).

A. How many miles should one travel (one way) before a flat rate is paid?

B. What is a reasonable rate for that distance?

11. Which do you feel would be a greater incentive for you to provide services to children living outside your typical service area?

- ☐ Mileage reimbursement
- ☐ Increased provider rates



12. Have you received the current travel reimbursement for 60 miles of travel one way?

☐ Yes

☐ No

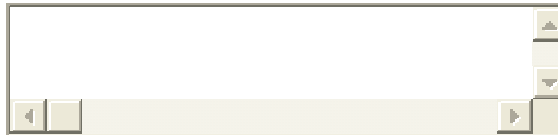
13. Do you believe the current travel reimbursement of \$45 for 60 miles of travel one way is reasonable?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. If you have a comment on the current travel reimbursement for 60 miles of travel one

way please tell us here.



15. Is the lack of mileage reimbursement a deterrent for you in expanding the area you serve for First Steps?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Are there any other factors that would persuade you to increase the distance you are willing to travel?

☐ Yes

☐ No

A. If you answered "Yes" above, please share those factors that would persuade you to

increase the distance you are willing to travel.

